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INTRODUCTION

Flight and Refugees in Historical Perspective

The sight that presented itself to the members of the international commission in the refugee camps on the Greek islands and on the mainland was evidently hard to put into words:

> On the humanitarian side, imagination cannot encompass the event. Only those can attempt to understand who have seen destitution, misery, disease and death in all their possible forms, and the scale of disaster is so unprecedented as to demand a new vision even from such persons.[1]

A reporter for *Foreign Affairs* made do with comparisons from the animal kingdom: "[The] refugees . . . maintained a fox-like existence in tents, wooden barracks, shelters of twigs, or of turf, even in caves."[2]

In Germany it was too cold for these kinds of accommodations, but a report in the *Neue Berliner Zeitung* about the Scheunenviertel (the Berlin neighborhood that was home to Jews and other poor immigrants from Eastern Europe) depicted a situation just as desperate:

> That boardinghouse is currently home to 120 Jewish refugees from the East. Many of the men arrived straight from Russian POW camps. Their ragged garments were a weird and wonderful hodgepodge of internationalist working class uniforms. In their eyes I saw millennial sorrow. There were women there too. They carried their children on their backs like bundles of dirty washing. Other children, who went scrabbling through a rickety world on crooked legs, gnawed on dry crusts.[3]

In Viennese emergency centers circumstances were not much better; according to contemporary reports, twenty-five refugees on average were housed in a single dwelling, eight to ten people to a room.[4] The close confinement and terrible hygienic conditions were an ideal breeding ground for flees, bedbugs, and lice that, in turn, transmitted typhus, today an almost forgotten disease but one that at the time was often fatal. In addition, there were repeated outbreaks of dysentery, smallpox, tuberculosis, and influenza. Death was an ever-present companion to the homeless; in the Greek refugee camps up to 70,000 people died from malnutrition and diseases, some of them epidemic.[5]

The author of this moving report about the Scheunenviertel was the writer Joseph Roth, who himself was forced to take flight several times during his life. His last escape in 1933 and the reasons that made him leave Germany were so unbearable for him that he drank himself to death in his Parisian exile. The two other passages cited above also come from 1923; they recount the misery of Greeks from Asia Minor following the "exchange of populations" agreed to internationally at the conference of Lausanne. In Europe and its near neighborhood in the Middle East, a genuine "refugee crisis" was unfolding at that time, in part along the same "Mediterranean" and "Balkan route" that the refugees of 2015 would take. The scale of the mass flight nearly a hundred years ago was, however, incomparably greater. In the early 1920s, about seven million people were in flight: nearly three million fleeing the revolution and civil war in Russia, two million fleeing the Greco-Turkish war that erupted in 1919, and more than one and a half million attempting to escape various wars and local conflicts toward the end of the "long" First World War, a war that did not really come to a close in Eastern and Southeastern Europe until around 1923.

Yet these streams of refugees (metaphors invoking a force of nature became current at the time) were a mere trickle compared with the deluge that followed from National Socialism and the Second World War. In the 1940s at least thirty million people were on the run in Europe, a number that does not even include displaced forced laborers and prisoners of war. Two to three million people wandered the streets of occupied Germany in 1945, along with several hundred thousand each in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Finland, and the Soviet Union. Old people and children especially were often no match for the hardships they faced.

The humanitarian disasters that followed both world wars did produce at least one positive outcome, however: the international community took up the challenge of refugees. In 1921 the recently established League of Nations, in reaction to the mass flight from the Bolsheviks, appointed the well-known Norwegian naturalist and explorer Fridtjof Nansen as "High Commissioner for Russian Refugees."[6] Soon the adjective "Russian" was dropped, since Nansen also had to deal with Greece, which took in more than half a million refugees from Asia Minor within a few months of its catastrophic defeat at the hands of the Turkish army.[7] After the Treaty of Lausanne, which authorized the first ethnic cleansing of two entire countries (the only exceptions being Western Thrace in Greece and Istanbul in Turkey), the number of refugees again increased dramatically.[8]

Later in the 1920s there was a brief pause in this history of massive refugee movements. Owing to an improved economic situation, those who had recently fled their home countries were able to strike roots in their countries of exile. Some countries, like France, even took in refugees willingly in order to compensate for their demographic losses from the war. But as early as 1933, the next mass exodus was under way, at first from Germany. Almost 60,000 people fled the National Socialists, and by the end of the decade they were followed by 370,000 more, most of them Jews. The League of Nations reacted to this new challenge in 1933 with a convention for refugees from Germany, which was followed in 1938 by a similar convention for refugees from Austria. Unlike the situation in the early 1920s, the immediate plight of the refugees was no longer the major problem; instead, it was the reluctance of countries to admit them. At the infamous Conference of Évian, all attempts at the admission and international resettlement of Jewish refugees failed. Hundreds of thousands of Jews who were no longer able to flee from Germany and German-annexed Austria in time died in German concentration camps.

After the Second World War, the international community drew far-reaching conclusions from this experience. In 1946, under the umbrella of the United Nations, the International Refugee Organization (IRO) was founded, an institution that initially attended to displaced persons (DPs) in Germany, Austria, Italy, and other countries. Four years later, after tough negotiations, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) emerged from out of the IRO, and to date this organization has been charged with the welfare of refugee groups all over the world. The British historian Peter Gatrell records the growth of international refugee assistance and the expanded scope of the tasks it has been assigned,[9] though often after serious delays, and—to this day—without adequate financial resources.

The desperate plight of refugees following both world wars forced the international community to define the term "refugee" with greater precision. This is obviously a matter of importance for this book as well, since distinguishing refugees from other groups of migrants was controversial already in the nineteenth century and remains so today.[10] The concept itself is of French derivation, dating to the era of the Huguenots, and that period will in consequence receive comprehensive treatment in the book's first chapter. It is striking that the way states and societies dealt with refugees was often more imaginative and accommodating in early modern Europe than in later periods. The same is true for the Cold War era, when the international community reacted quickly, effectively, and in a spirit of solidarity to a variety of crises (such as the Red Army's invasion of Hungary in 1956 and the "boat people" fleeing Vietnam in the late 1970s). One cannot derive any political prescriptions for contemporary challenges from these historical observations and comparisons, but the deeper temporal dimensions of history do undoubtedly open up new horizons for those facing these issues today.

In the 1920s the League of Nations was still handling refugees on a case-by-case basis; at issue were Russians, Greeks, Armenians, and Assyrian

Christians, who were viewed as "refugees" because they were stranded outside their countries of origin and did not enjoy "the legal protection of their government."[11] It was indeed fatal to be "stateless," as Hannah Arendt later termed it, in a world of nation-states. The precarious legal status of refugees was a major problem as it excluded them from the official labor market and from social services in their countries of arrival and was an obstacle at every border crossing. The League of Nations attempted to facilitate stateless people's onward journeys by issuing identification documents, so-called Nansen passports. This measure was, apart from the emergency assistance provided in numerous reception camps, the twentieth century's first venture into international refugee policy and the first test for the concept of international resettlement.

The Geneva Refugee Convention of 1951 rested not on any case-by-case but on a common definition of refugees that identified political, national, racial, social, and religious persecution as grounds for fleeing a country.[12] The convention was however initially confined to Europe and applicable only to those refugees who had had to leave their homeland before 1951. These geographic and temporal limitations were necessary in order to wrest approval of this UN convention from Communist countries. Alongside various sections about the humane treatment of refugees, the convention contained a prohibition against forcible return (non-refoulement): refugees were not supposed to be repatriated to their countries of origin against their will. Immediately after the Second World War, the leading Western allies, Great Britain and the United States, had violated this principle in the case of several hundred thousands of Soviet citizens fleeing the USSR, with fatal consequences. Hence, this book will also look into cases of flight that failed—and into the consequences for those affected by this failure.

The signatories to the Geneva Refugee Convention (including the numerous relief organizations that took part in drawing it up) undertook to open access to the labor market for refugees, recognize their educational degrees, and put them on an equal footing with respect to social welfare benefits.[13] These stipulations evolved historically and that fact needs to be recalled because, among other reasons, they have been called into question by various European countries reacting to the massive exodus from the Near East in 2015/16. At the same time, the signatory powers to the Geneva Convention restricted refugee status to specific groups. Owing to their experience of National Socialism, and in the context of the Cold War, victims of political persecution had priority. Wars or civil wars were not mentioned as reasons for flight. Domestic refugees, who today are a majority among all displaced persons, were left out entirely. The twelve million German refugees and the more than two million Poles from the eastern regions of Poland that had been annexed to the USSR in 1945 (these being the two largest groups that lost their homelands in postwar Europe) were thus not recognized as refugees, but they are treated as such in this book.

A call for legal and social equality entails an imperative to integrate, even if the Geneva Refugee Convention does not use the term "integration." But the convention turned "refugees" into a finite quantity: anyone naturalized in a host state would no longer be regarded as a refugee according to UN statutes. This is the point of departure for this book: integration has proven to be a better means for solving refugee crises, real and imagined, than the mostly futile attempts to build walls and fences or the resort to violent measures like the imposition of the Iron Curtain.

Is integration an appropriate telos for a historiography that deals with refugees and individual histories of flight? The Geneva Refugee Convention seems to suggest as much, since in international law (as we have seen) "refugee" status expires once a person obtains citizenship in the host country. Yet integration is no linear and irreversible process, despite what much of the sociological literature seems to suggest. (Additional details on the term "integration" and the rather new field of "integration history" will be explored in the next section.)[14] As a glance at the history of refugees and other migrants shows—and flight is, in the end, only another variant of migration[15]—integration has frequently been accompanied by conflicts and in rare cases by reversals.

For a number of years now, there has been a growing fear in Europe that the integration of past migrants has failed. This anxiety alters attitudes toward refugees, who are increasingly perceived as a threat, and not as objects for care and compassion. Alarmism of this kind is especially prevalent in the United States, where President Trump ordered a ban on admitting refugees immediately upon assuming office. His decision received much less attention than it deserved, because the media was preoccupied with his simultaneous "Muslim Country Ban." Nevertheless, it is the refugee ban, parts of which he was forced to rescind half a year later (although the ban was then reestablished for selected countries targeted by the original order), that may prove more damaging for international conflict resolution, especially for the UN and UNHCR. In addition to issuing restrictions on international resettlement, now fallen to levels lower than those that prevailed immediately after the terror attacks on September 11, 2001, the Trump administration has rolled back refugee rights and hindered asylum seekers from entering the United States. In Europe, right-wing politicians are demanding and, to the extent they have the power to do so, implementing similar policies.

In historical perspective, the closure of borders and suspicions against refugees are nothing new. This is also true for American history; in the 1920s and again in the 1950s era of Senator Joseph McCarthy, refugees from Russia and the Soviet Union were suspected of being crypto-communists and spies. The 300,000 displaced persons who were eventually admitted to the US in the late 1940s as the first major refugee movement ran up against deeply ingrained mistrust in 1945 and 1946. Although most of them were Holocaust survivors, it took years of political lobbying, above all by Jewish organizations, before they were granted entry visas. Humanitarian concerns prevailed only in the 1970s, as a legacy of the civil rights movement in the US and of the 68ers in Europe. Nevertheless, as Carl Bon Tempo has shown, this consensus on humanitarian principles was always shaky, and it became even less stable after 2001.[16] Since 2015 it seems to be on the retreat almost everywhere in the Western world. This book aims to explore why attitudes toward refugees have changed and why the doors to their admission have alternately opened and closed, both recently and in more distant times.

Throughout European or American history, refugees have repeatedly been misused as objects of demarcation. The reason for this is quite simply that refugees usually arrive as strangers and have-nots. Flight almost always involves both a loss of property, jobs, and social standing. Since the days of Emile Durkheim and Georg Simmel, two of modern sociology's founding fathers, we have known that strangers and the poor regularly incur prejudice and condescension. Simmel offered an explanation for this in his famous essay "The Stranger," in which he also portrayed the alien as "the *potential* wanderer."[17] Simmel takes on added relevance here due to his theory of power. In contrast with Max Weber's focus on charismatic leaders or Antonio Gramsci's attention to structural and discursive hegemony, Simmel's concern is the scope of action available to those confronted with power and hierarchy in state and society. Using both biographical case studies and a structural analysis of the longue durée, this book will ask how much latitude refugees had during their departure, along their flight routes, and in their countries of arrival.[18]

Although their own scope of action was usually very limited, refugees did bring change to the countries that received them. This was true, for example, of the "Indochina" refugees admitted to the US in the late seventies, whose resettlement signaled that "white only" immigration had ended once and for all. The admission of more than 400,000 Southeast Asians was a powerful message and a measure against racism. A limited comparison may be ventured between post-Vietnam America and (with a time delay) post-Holocaust Germany, which by 2015 was also keeping its doors open as proof that it had become a truly liberal country untainted by its National Socialist past. Whether concerns about refugees are projected in a negative or positive way, however, they have this in common: they are much more often about the host countries and societies than about the refugees themselves.

This book, by contrast, understands refugees not primarily as the objects of history, but rather as subjects and independent actors. As such, refugees should not remain nameless. To this end I have included biographical case studies, "analytical portraits" that take a look at individual refugees, some of them famous or at least familiar personages, others completely unknown. Flight, uprooting, the attempt (typically arduous) at starting over, and permanent exile abroad—all these things are better understood when viewed from a biographical perspective.

Refugees as a field of research

Modern European history is filled with refugees. This is also true of American history, for religious and political dissenters were among the founding fathers of the United States. Thomas Paine, one of them, wrote forcefully about refugees in 1776: "Every spot of the Old World is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia, and Africa, have long expelled her, Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind."[19]

Because of their relevance to European and American history, there are dozens of books dealing with refugees. It would be impossible to provide even a rudimentary list of that secondary literature. Suffice it that over the past decade historians, including Peter Gatrell and Daniel Cohen, have written important general works on refugees and displaced persons.[20] Carl Bon Tempo, María Cristina Garcia, and Stephen R. Porter published fundamental works on refugee politics in the US.[21] There is even more literature covering specific periods of mass flight, such as the interwar and postwar years, and on individual countries in Europe. (Readers less interested in these reflections on research fundamentals can skip ahead to Chapter One.)[22] A common limitation of much of the older literature is that it deals mainly with the causes of flight, with the act of fleeing itself, and with the hardship and misery associated with flight, or with the policy of the receiving states, but devotes little attention to the agency of the refugees.

What happens to refugees after they flee home is mostly cut off, as if their lives had ended in the countries from which they departed or in the many refugee camps that were usually only a provisional (not their final) destination.[23] This book, by contrast, will take into account the history of refugees *after* their arrival in their respective host countries.[24] This widened focus rests on the aforementioned "analytical portraits" and on group studies of refugees (proffered here in full awareness of the problems posed by group-based approaches[25]), and by drawing on the insights of historical sociology and social science research (both past and present) on the integration of refugees.

Expanding the historian's horizons to include the afterlives of refugees, the years after their arrival, does have one major drawback: it makes the topic even more unwieldy. The simplest approach to structuring this book would have been to put everything in chronological order, starting (in principle) with the biblical exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt and ending with the Syrian civil war. But simply stringing together all the major instances of flight in human history (including prehistoric and ancient examples) would be too great a task for one single book. Moreover, a purely chronological approach would implicitly confirm a simplistic understanding of history in which a single and linear flow of time—what the language of high modernity once designated as "progress"—would permeate the entire world with equal intensity. In order to avoid these traps of traditional historiography, this monograph and its individual chapters are structured topologically: first the book deals with religious refugees, then with the escape from radical nationalism and ethnic cleansing, and finally with politically motivated flight.

The oldest reason for flight in modern European history is religious intolerance. At the end of the fifteenth century, which is where most historians set the beginning of the modern era, Spain experienced the first pervasive persecution of religious minorities. It was almost impossible for individual Muslims or Jews to escape the Inquisition. Even converts, including those of the second and third generations, were targeted. While local acts of collective expulsion had taken place as early as the Middle Ages (especially in German cities), the earthly purgatory that descended on Christian Spain was especially radical and wide-ranging; and the refugee movements it sparked were correspondingly harsh. Something like half a million Muslims and Jews were forced to leave Spain, an unprecedented number measured against the population of Spain and Europe at that time. The very term "religious refugee" in today's understanding was coined during the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[26] They are the focus of this book's first chapter, which includes as well later examples of religious persecutions, since differences of faith and denomination were also misused in later eras, most recently in the former Yugoslavia, in order to exclude and expel minorities.

Modern nationalism, which began to emerge in the late eighteenth century, was the cause of an increasingly rigid process of both exclusion and inclusion, and it triggered the most massive incidents of flight in history. In the twentieth century alone, around thirty million people lost their homelands in Europe owing to a radical, ethnic, and in part racist nationalism. These kinds of flight from nationalism will be treated in the second chapter of this book.[27] There was a reverse side to the coin of nationalist intolerance and persecution in the form of national solidarity, which helped countries cope with massive influxes of refugees. The absorption and integration of refugees under nationalist auspices, however, came at a price: it raised the general level of nationalism, which was often the catalyst for additional conflicts and violence.

The third variety of flight is less weighty in purely quantitative terms, but to this day it continues to shape international law and perceptions about refugees in the Western world. In the course of the American and the French Revolutions, for the first time, massive numbers of people were forced into exile on ideological grounds. This history of political and ideological flight (for the sake of brevity, we shall confine ourselves to the first attribute in the following pages, although nationalism is of course also a modern ideology) shaped the entire nineteenth century. In this era, following the revolutions of 1830–31 and 1848–49, the political exile was born as a historical figure and, in several Western European countries as well as in the United States, a right to asylum was established and secured.[28]

In the twentieth century, three periods of political flight may be distinguished: the early interwar period, when the League of Nations and international NGOs developed enduring principles and instruments to handle large-scale humanitarian crises; the 1930s, when Western states failed to meet the challenges triggered by fascism and National Socialism; and the era of the Cold War, when refugees experienced what Daniel Gerard Cohen has called their "Golden Age."[29] This is true inasmuch as this was the period when the Geneva Refugee Convention and other crucial rules were created and implemented. Most recently, Donald Trump's measures against the admission of refugees, the actions of likeminded presidents and prime ministers in Europe, and the disunity this has sown within the EU have ushered in bad times for refugees.

Looking back to the early postwar years, is "golden" really the right adjective? To answer that, one would in principle have to ask the refugees themselves, and this is what the analytical portraits in this book are intended to accomplish. On the one hand, there were periods over the last five hundred years when flight was relatively easy. On the other, there were times when refugees were turned away and only able to find a place where they could start life over again after arduous detours. One of the central concerns of this book is to identify those factors that determine when either favorable or unfavorable conditions tend to prevail for refugees, and to explain the causes for these vicissitudes. Ideally, there was a close geographical link between a refugee's departure and destination, as in the case of Eastern Bloc escapees. Once they had crossed the Iron Curtain, they were admitted into Western countries immediately and for good. But most flights were not structured so advantageously, and refugees had to overcome great distances until, often after many years, they found permanent accommodations. In addition to structural factors like these, normative attitudes are also decisive for determining the kind of reception refugees were likely to receive.

As a consequence of arranging the presentation according to these three major reasons for flight, the book's timelines run in parallel to some extent. Each of the following three chapters begins anew in terms of time and then follows its own chronology. At first glance this may be confusing, since certain periods and sometimes individual events are treated more than once. But this cannot be avoided, since specific historical watersheds, the two world wars for instance, saw every variety of flight. The advantage of this topological breakdown is that it makes it easier to understand how refugees are absorbed (or not) and under what conditions they might be able to start a new life. Questions about legal history are not the center of attention here, though one could fill many books with the details of international refugee conventions or of individual countries' asylum laws and practices.[30] Nevertheless, the most important changes in international and asylum law are a recurrent topic in all three major chapters, insofar as these changes shaped the way refugees were absorbed and integrated.

When it comes to differentiating among the major causes of flight—religious, nationalist, and political-ideological—we are dealing with ideal types in Max Weber's sense. Various minorities were forced to leave their homeland owing to their religious denomination *and* their nationality. Nationalism, moreover—like religion and denomination—was always also a very political issue. The motives refugees had were likewise diverse. For example, while people from the Eastern Bloc, regarded with so much sympathy in the context of the Cold War, emigrated out of political conviction, economic hardship also played a role. As the French historian Stéphane Dufoix has pointed out, a multitude of micro-decisions and micro-constraints are at work in every kind of flight.[31] Finally, there is the question as to whether this topological breakdown draws dividing lines artificially, and whether these "grand" categories are workable for the purposes of historical research and writing. It speaks for this approach that these three major causes of flight influenced both attitudes in the countries that absorbed refugees and the progress of their integration. Religious, national, and political forms of solidarity proved crucial when it came to taking in refugees and legitimizing an "open door" policy toward them.

The openness of the receiving society is also a crucial factor affecting long-term integration. This book will analyze historical integration processes in four areas. The first concerns refugees' legal status, whether they receive equal status, rights, and citizenship in their adopted country.[32] The spectrum is quite broad here, ranging from immediate legal equality—as in the case of German expellees after 1945—all the way to deliberate exclusion.

A second area of integration, one frequently examined by sociologists and taken up in this book time and again with respect to refugees, is the labor market. The issue at stake in this second and perhaps most important dimension of integration is whether refugees can find a job, to what extent that job fits their previous skills and qualifications, and whether employment facilitates upward mobility—at least for successive generations. Earlier refugees often succeeded in moving up the social ladder, sometimes even rising to form a new elite, as did the Huguenots in Prussia and as also happened with refugees from Southeastern Europe in the Turkish Republic.

Professional integration and social mobility are frequently based on geographical mobility, which is why housing, the third area, becomes so important. To what extent do refugees and other immigrants reside in mixed neighborhoods, to what extent do they live isolated, or even in camps? The issue of integration (or disintegration) in the living environment has given rise to such catchphrases as “ghettoization” and “parallel society.” And, as so often, it is a problem that goes beyond debates about refugees and pertains also to other migrants.

The fourth and final area, which is sometimes viewed as the highest stage of integration, is marriage behavior. It certainly is a strong indicator of integration when people marry across cultural, social, and racial divides. Yet, historians specializing in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union know that even states and societies with high rates of intermarriage can fall apart. One should also warn against viewing integration too literally in terms of “stages,” since that term implies a modernist model of linear integration.

There was a time in the United States when the prevalent model was the “melting pot,” a term invented by a second-generation descendant of Eastern European Jews who had fled from pogroms in Czarist Russia (see Chapter 1.4). In recent years, many politicians in Europe also seem to have had some process like the melting pot in mind when they talked about “integration” but seemed to mean “assimilation.” Independently of how integration is envisioned (which depends on political and cultural preferences), both the term and the process are usually regarded as positive. This goes back to Durkheim, who used “integration” in a normative sense and warned against the disintegration of modern industrial societies. More recent sociologists follow a more neutral, functionalist approach, which this book shares.[33]

The philosopher Elizabeth Anderson has set standards in the American debates on integration, and also distinguishes it clearly from assimilation.[34] Both terms have in common that they are an issue discussed more intensively when integration (or in earlier times assimilation) *no longer* seems to work, and when increasing frictions in society arouse the worries of social scientists and (the rare) historian who chooses to work with sociological concepts.

The closest American equivalent to European discussions about integration are debates on multiculturalism. It is impossible to differentiate all the phases and details of these debates in the inevitably slim introduction to a book like this; nevertheless, the contours of this controversy merit at least a brief mention. In the United States, the debate has become both more settled and more contentious. In the 1960s, books like *Beyond the Melting Pot* and *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* raised the question of whether a “salad bowl” was perhaps a more apt metaphor for America as a “nation of immigrants.”[35] In 1965, the restrictive quota system of the 1920s was reformed and a widely accepted consensus favoring the concept of “ethnic pluralism” emerged. One day a consensus like this might also inspire Europe, where multiculturalism has become more of a bugbear than a stimulus to constructive intellectual and political debates. But there is ongoing controversy in the US about which version of that consensus should prevail: the right wing’s (assimilation) or the left wing’s (now known as “multiculturalism”).[36] In addition, anxiety about illegal immigration (especially from Latin America) and an American future that is non-white and "majority minority" helped propel Donald Trump into power.

Historians dealing with integration must confront an additional research problem: few sources convey sufficient information about what kind of identity individuals or social groups had, and whether (or to what degree) they felt integrated into receiving societies. Therefore, this book focuses more on social behavior. Although this may contradict the "linguistic turn" and other postmodern paradigms, I think that it is often more fruitful to focus on what people did than what they said or might have thought about their "identity." This approach seems especially conducive to moving the discussion forward to consider long-term processes like integration, which often occurs only in the second or third generation.

As far as historical sources are concerned, these four dimensions of integration—legal status, access to the labor market, everyday social contacts, and familial integration—can rarely be studied based on hard data (of the kind collected by social scientists today). The further back a period is, the harder it becomes to find precise information—about population groups, occupations, social mobility, and residential or living environments. Statistics on naturalization or marriages, by contrast, are easier to find, though here (as with other dimensions of integration) it is important to pay attention to gender differences.[37] To be sure, historical research on integration processes cannot be conducted as systematically as in the social sciences, yet it is possible to reach some conclusions derived from the deeper temporal dimensions of history. The preconditions for integration vary from one period to another, starting with a given country's type of statehood and its political system, and extending to its basic economic conditions.[38]

It may be of some consolation to historians studying past integration processes to learn that the data available for present-day studies of refugees are not much better. Most data are still gathered by state agencies or the subcontractors working for them. Moreover, government surveys, such as the microcensus of the German Federal Statistical Office, do not distinguish between refugees and other migrants, but record only their country of origin, evidence that the experience of flight plays at best a minor role from the perspective of government administrations. Refugees, in any event, have other worries and employ a different vocabulary; soon after they arrive sheer survival takes precedence, having a roof over one's head, and finding an opportunity to earn money. That was not so simple, as again Joseph Roth testified: "Of course: their papers! Half a Jewish life slips by in a fruitless struggle over papers. . . ."[39] What Roth meant by this was the residence and work permit that he, as a Galician refugee in Berlin and then later in Paris, was able to receive only after several tries. His voice and those of other refugees are heard in the final chapter of this book on experiences of flight. By narrating their own experiences in public and in writing, refugees inscribed themselves into the history of the receiving countries. Very often they presented themselves as industrious workers, skilled laborers, and carriers of modernization processes. Such success stories call for critical scrutiny, but it will be shown in various subchapters that the receiving countries almost always profit by taking in refugees. This message is even more relevant in times (past and present) when refugees are increasingly portrayed as a danger, a security risk, and (last but not least) as illegal migrants.

Flight and migration

How can we differentiate between flight and other forms of migration? It is almost self-evident that flight takes place under duress and under force or the threat of force. Two variations should be distinguished here: direct coercion, such as armed force or some other form of physical attack, and indirect coercion. In the latter case people flee because they fear violence and living conditions that threaten to become seriously worse.[40] In contrast to the mostly well-organized journeys undertaken by trans-Atlantic and intra-European economic migrants, these escape routes often pose serious threats to life and limb. Many refugees find themselves spending years on an odyssey through different countries, whereas labor migrants usually have clear ideas about what countries they are going to and head directly for these destinations. In general it can be said that "push factors" play a stronger role in the case of refugees, while "pull factors," such as the attractiveness of a (often idealized) new homeland, are more important for other migrants. The juxtaposition of "push" and "pull" is an old topos of migration research, but it is a schema that does not quite suit the history of flight because, in many cases, refugees are kept wandering from one country and even continent to another until they finally feel safe enough to start a new life. This is true, for example, of the Syrians who migrated from Turkey to the EU in 2015. Turkey was an intermediate stop; but they remained refugees, even if politicians like Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán dispute this. (It is astonishing how oblivious Orbán is to the history of his own nation and region. If one were to follow his notion of legality, then none of the 200,000 Hungarian refugees who crossed the border to Austria in 1956–57 would have had a hope of moving on to the countries of exile that later admitted them as permanent residents. The current Austrian government seems to have forgotten this as well. The international resettlement of refugees, at least in the form of an EU-wide distribution quota, is something Vienna's recent conservative–far right ruling coalition consistently rejected. Yet it is just this kind of cross-national burden sharing that saved Austria from a major humanitarian crisis in 1956–57, 1968, and 1992.)

All in all, the difference between labor migration and flight migration (I am aware that this term sounds a bit awkward in English, but the original

German distinction between *Arbeitsmigration* and *Fluchtmigration* has proven useful in scholarly debates) can be summarized quite simply: Refugees leave their homes in order to save their lives, while labor migrants do so in order to improve their living conditions. A second distinction is the prevalence or absence of violence and traumatization. There is, finally, a third difference that relates to the migrant's homeland, which is often cut off from the refugee but still accessible to the labor migrant. Many in the latter category send home remittances and even build retirement houses in the old country, while refugees often can only dream of returning to the homes they were forced to leave due to war and destruction.

An alternative concept circulating in the research literature is that of "forced migration." Here, however, it should be kept in mind that migration movements are seldom completely voluntary. Even labor migration is frequently a consequence of pressure and distress. When natural catastrophes trigger migration, people are also not leaving voluntarily. The same is true for environmental migration (which will be considered briefly in Chapter 4.2 on the Syrian and European "refugee crisis"). The boundaries between what is forced and what is voluntary are thus blurred, causing specialists in the history of migration, such as Leo Lucassen, to express well-founded doubts about the concept of forced migration.[41]

Refugees are welded together by their common experience of flight, no matter how different the details of their histories may be. Self-declared exiles tended to remain politically more active in the countries of arrival and attempted to have an impact on their countries of origin. Their ultimate goal was to overturn the political order that had compelled them to leave. Sometimes exiles labeled themselves also as émigrés, which suggests a more passive stance, and a coming to terms with the fact that the exile would be permanent.

Although there is a close linguistic identity between the two terms, it should not be taken for granted that refugees identify with their refuge. Some groups have even perceived the term "refugee" as pejorative and rejected the designation—among them the Germans who came from Eastern Europe to postwar Germany and the French who arrived in mainland France from Algeria. Moreover, collective labeling may obscure internal differences. On closer inspection (to offer just two examples), the Sudeten Germans from industrialized northern Bohemia and the Protestant agricultural workers from Masuria (formerly a part of East Prussia, today northeastern Poland) who arrived in West Germany in 1945 had just as little in common with each other as a Christian merchant from Aleppo with a Kurdish peasant from the Euphrates valley who both reached Germany, Austria, or Sweden in 2015. But by seeking refuge and being accorded the corresponding status in the countries that took them in, these groups had to grapple with that term and sometimes they chose to self-identify as refugees. Since the 1980s, when the public mood turned against immigration, and to some extent also against refugees, a number of pejorative terms emerged in the languages of every Western country. There was and still is talk of "pseudo asylum seekers" (in German *Scheinasylanten*), "economic refugees" (an awkward term that casts suspicion on the motives for flight), and more recently (in the US) "fake refugees." These terms served to delegitimize refugees by imputing primarily material motives to them.

Even in earlier historical eras, the way refugees were treated depended less on their previous history and the vicissitudes of their persecution, and much more on the attitudes and political elites of the society taking them in. In any country wanting to distinguish itself from Communist dictatorships during the Cold War, Eastern European or Cuban refugees were welcome as living proof of human rights violations and of the dark or even criminal sides of Stalinism and state socialism. If flight took place in times of economic crisis, the doors were shut, both in the national discourse and along national boundaries. One thing is new, however, in our era of postmodern mass democracies. Refugees are now increasingly used to stir up the public for campaign purposes and to foment blatant nationalism. The semantic details of these public discourses are just as important as the differences between individual instances of flight and different refugee groups, which a work of history must also, of course, bear in mind.

One thing that the "guest workers" of postwar-era Germany, Austria, France, and other European countries have in common with the refugees of earlier periods is that they, like the societies that took them in, were initially expecting only to stay provisionally. The first generation of refugees in particular kept a "packed suitcase," even though there was usually no option of return in the wake of ethnic cleansings and religious conflicts. Political refugees, by contrast, were more frequently able to return home from exile, since the great dictatorships of the twentieth century proved in the end to have unexpectedly short lifespans. In some cases former refugees rose to high positions in public office, as in the case of Willy Brandt and Bruno Kreisky, who had spent the formative years of their lives in exile, or in the case of various presidents of the Baltic states in the 1990s. Yet, unlike the situation of labor migrants, remigration back into the old (and imagined) homeland remained a rare exception; in most cases, refugees stayed put in the countries that had absorbed them. Almost always, this was to the advantage of the societies and economies of those countries.

There has been little discussion of these advantages recently. Since the autumn of 2015 debates about refugees in both the public and the media have centered almost exclusively on the ways in which societies are encumbered, overburdened, and threatened by refugees. The 1920s and the period after the Second World War, however, witnessed movements of refugees in much greater numbers relative to the size of the global population.[42] This is especially applicable to Europe, which through 1947 was affected more severely by mass flight than any other continent.

Reflections on space: A larger Europe

But what do we really mean here by "Europe," and how can we apply this geographical and political concept to history? Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Europe has increasingly been equated with the EU. Although many Europeans and non-Europeans of course do realize that the continent ends at the Ural mountains in the East, European integration within the framework of the EU has reinforced the perception of the Bosporus and the Aegean in the southeast as a fixed geographical and almost natural boundary (the vision of the Caucasus is much less clear in this regard). Each of these boundaries is, as Norman Davies pointed out in his great synthesis of European history, a political construction. He highlighted the issue of the continent's changing visions and borders by employing the term "tidal Europe."[43] Indeed, in the east and southeast of the continent, geographic, political, and cultural borders were by no means as clear as they may appear today. A good hundred years ago, the conflicts over the European territories of the Ottoman Empire, which in 1912 still extended as far as the Adriatic and today's Serbia, were treated as an "Oriental question." Clearly, Westerners did not necessarily locate the Orient in the Near East, but from time to time, instead, in Southeastern Europe.[44] At the same time, until the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, the Ottoman Empire was part and parcel of the European balance of powers and state system. The Republic of Turkey was founded in the context of European nation-state building following the First World War. These substantive points make a powerful case for treating the Ottoman Empire and Turkey—despite all of today's political conflicts—as just as much a part of European history as the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.[45]

Indeed, the Middle Eastern successor states of the Ottoman Empire—Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq—also have ties to Europe, not least because they came into being as a result of French and British colonial rule. Israel was founded by refugees and emigrants from Europe who after World War II wanted to establish a nation-state on the European model, which led to massive refugee flows in this part of the world. It has already happened once, barely a hundred years ago (1922–23, as a result of the Greco-Turkish War), that about a million people fled across the Aegean in a way that affected public order and values in Europe, albeit under different and far more unfavorable circumstances.

All these and any number of other contexts can be better understood if we broaden our view of European history to include *neighboring regions* beyond the Mediterranean and the Asian territories of the Russian Empire or Soviet Union. It is almost a banality to state that the history of Europe has always been deeply connected with the Americas and the United States, but this is particularly true for refugee movements and the development of international refugee institutions, such as the UNHCR. Expanding our perspective to the east, south, and west is justified on empirical grounds, since Novosibirsk and faraway Vladivostok, Buenos Aires, and Boston have all been shaped by people and cultures coming from Europe; Beirut was once called the "Paris of the Middle East," and Istanbul's population had a Christian majority well into the late nineteenth century. This opening up of European history should not be read as an attempt to play down European colonialism, but rather to better take into consideration Europe's political, social, and cultural relations with neighboring world regions. It also helps complement global history, which usually looks at Europe by focusing on its overseas relations and colonies (subjects that also come up here, especially in Chapter 2.4, which deals with postcolonial flight and remigration). Global history and postcolonial studies have proved fruitful approaches, but they are influenced by colonial perceptions of space and an Occidentalist view of global relations.

The vision of a wider Europe and terms like "the West" (as presented here) also have their drawbacks and limits. Both can provoke accusations of "Eurocentrism." My main reply to this kind of knockout argument is that my own perspective rests on a different, above all more eastern conception of Europe, and not exclusively on the continent's occidental half. (What is criticized as "Eurocentrism" could often more accurately be labeled Occidentalism.) A strong focus on Europe is also inevitable, because the history of refuge and refugees has European origins. The Reconquista in Spain was the first case of an entire country purged of unwanted minorities. The trans-Atlantic caesura of 1492 needs also to be remembered in this regard. In the seventeenth century, the concept of the *réfugié* spread, owing of the persecution of the Huguenots. In the "long" nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire took first place as a "refugee country," receiving about four million people from territories lost in Southeastern Europe.

Then, in the era of the "long" First World War (1912–23)—a conflict overwhelmingly fought in Europe—refugees became a global problem. Thus, well into the 1950s, it was in Europe that saw the most, and the most extensive, movements of refugees. It should be acknowledged, however, that today the vast majority of refugees have been uprooted from zones of conflict in the Global South. Hence, any book on recent or present-day refugee movements and policy challenges would require a different and wider geographic focus.[46] But as regards the first half of the twentieth century and earlier periods, much can be learned by focusing on Europe.

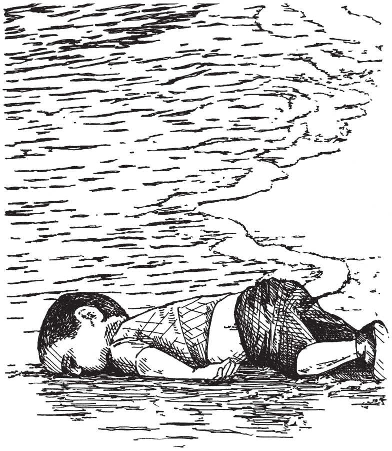
That is also true of the idea of human rights, which was constitutive for the UN Refugee Convention of 1951 and its predecessors in the interwar period. Many key ideas about that convention and of the interwar refugee regime originated on the old continent, not because "European civilization" was superior, but because Europe was so successful in developing radical nationalism, racism, and almost destroying itself in two world wars. As a negative example of actual Eurocentrism we might point to the geographical restriction of the 1951 Geneva Convention to Europe, as if there were at that time no acute refugee problems in other parts of the world.[47] In fact about thirty million people were uprooted in China during the Second World War, and in 1947, as a consequence of India's partition, more than twelve million people lost their homeland (a catastrophe in which Europeans, and more specifically Great Britain as a colonial power, played an inglorious part). India, Pakistan, and other newly independent states, however, did not ratify the Geneva Refugee Convention, since they feared that this would put them again under the influence of the European colonial powers.

A protocol added in 1967 finally removed this birth defect of the Geneva Refugee Convention; its legal validity and radius of action were extended worldwide. This process of universalization also had its beginnings in the immediate proximity of Europe. Between 1954 and 1962 about 200,000 Algerians fled that country's war of independence for Tunisia and Morocco, where they were looked after by the UNHCR. The globalization of the Geneva Refugee Convention was thus merely the next logical step.

More knowledge about the near neighborhood of Europe is also necessary in order that refugees from the Middle East who have arrived since 2015 can be better integrated. So long as our basic information about refugees' countries of origin—in the case of Syria about the Alawites, Assyrians, the members of different Sunni religious persuasions, or about nationalities like the Kurds—remains seriously limited, integration will be hard, at least harder than necessary. Here, too, a historical example is relevant: When, after the Conference of Lausanne barely a hundred years ago, Asia Minor's Christians were forcibly resettled, officials from the great powers and even people in Greece were astonished to learn that many of these Christians did not know much Greek but spoke Turkish instead. The "Karamanlides" from Anatolia were stigmatized as foreigners in Greece, which delayed their integration by decades. This drove many refugees into the arms of the Communists and contributed to the outbreak of the Greek civil war in 1945.[48]

This expanded view of Europe and its history is informed in particular by the geographical mobility of refugees, who even in earlier eras walked thousands of kilometers along land routes, headed across the Mediterranean along different trajectories, and even, of course, across the Atlantic. Mobility has recently been on the rise once again, thanks to new communications media. It is hard to prove or disprove that the selfies that refugees took with German chancellor Angela Merkel and sent around the world via Facebook, Whatsapp, and other social media acted all that strongly as a pull factor on the one million Syrians, Iraqis, and Afghanis who came to Europe in that year. Most of these "selfies" were, in fact, professional press photos of the German chancellor taken in a Berlin refugee home. What is unquestionable is that communication has brought the world closer together, especially between the countries of Europe and those across the Mediterranean.

Between the old and the new homeland, if that is what it will become, there lies a long and dangerous crossing. According to information from the Inter-



Alan Kurdi drowned together with his older brother and his mother when a boat overladen with refugees capsized on the way from the Turkish coast to the Greek island of Kos. The family had entrusted themselves to smugglers because they did not have the visas needed for regulated emigration to join an aunt living in Canada. Alan's body washed up onto the beach of the seaside resort of Bodrum on September 2, 2015. There the toddler lay like a piece of flotsam, clothed quite normally in a T-shirt, shorts, and a young child's shoes. The body appeared unscathed, but Alan's head was halfway under water. The photos reverberated powerfully in the media and politics: Swedish foreign minister Margot Wallström broke into tears while the television cameras were running, British prime minister David Cameron pledged to take in 20,000 refugees from Syria annually, and the Austrian and German governments announced three days later an opening of their borders to thousands of refugees who had made it through to Hungary and were stranded at the eastern train station in Budapest as well as in provisional camps. The pictures of Alan Kurdi unleashed such rage because they were not staged or—in postmodern parlance—"constructed." A child's innocence apparently stirs poignant responses across cultural boundaries, while grown-up refugees have all manner of possible motives imputed to them. On September 4, 2015, Alan Kurdi was buried along with his brother and his mother in his hometown of Kobane, a city in northern Syria besieged for months by ISIS.

national Organization for Migration (IOM), the most important NGO in this field, in 2015 alone 3,770 people lost their lives fleeing over the Mediterranean, and in 2016 the number of those drowned rose to over 4,500.[49] The number of unreported cases surely is far higher, since many nameless victims disappear without a trace, their corpses sinking into the sea. It was different, and momentously so, in the case of the toddler Alan Kurdi. The pictures taken of this three-year-old boy, who drowned in September 2015 while crossing the Aegean, stunned the world and contributed to Austria and Germany deciding against closing their borders to refugees from the Middle East. As will be discussed in Chapter 4.2, the borders were never opened in the literal sense; they were just not closed when masses of refugees arrived in Austria in September 2015.

In spite of so many deaths in the Mediterranean, movements of refugees over wide areas are easier today than in earlier eras of history, when tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands died in flight. By contrast—and this is an additional thesis of this book—the preconditions for social integration have been worsening since the 1970s.[50] The reasons for this are varied but are linked above all to changes in the labor market, declining social mobility, and media developments, as well as to a vicious circle of negative attitudes and anxieties.

Are today's anxieties about integration of refugees and other migrants justified? Here it needs to be said that Germany and other European states have managed to cope with much larger movements of refugees in their history. There can be no question that integrating the 890,000 refugees who arrived in the Federal Republic in 2015 (some 280,000 refugees were recorded for 2016) poses a major challenge. This also applies to Austria and Sweden, two countries that have taken in a similar or even greater number of refugees in relation to their overall populations. Yet in history various countries have successfully dealt with much larger numbers of refugees, and under more difficult economic and political circumstances. History also shows how to achieve the kind of solidarity that every society, and especially every democracy, needs.

Historical examples of integration will be discussed one refugee group at a time following an account of each group's flight and admittance to a new country. It should be noted in advance that it is not feasible to discuss every group this way, and certainly not every country of destination for refugees. A comparative history of integration along these lines would have to follow very precise parameters, and it would be a large-scale project taking several years. Yet it is possible to derive a few insights from the findings concerning the historical processes of integration presented in this book. To this end, I have not limited myself to contemporary history but have deliberately gone back to include a longer period of time, since many current studies about the so-called refugee crisis are, with all due respect, rather cursory. It is open to dispute how much one can really learn from history, especially from its deeper chronological layers, but certainly enough would be gained if one were to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

One mistake that should most especially be avoided is the outright rejection of refugees, such as happened in the 1930s and immediately following the Second World War, a dismissal that cost hundreds of thousands of people their lives. Failed flight is therefore another recurrent theme of this book. Refusing admission to refugees had, moreover, an impact on the integration of those migrants and refugees who had arrived earlier. Outward exclusion always brought with it domestic exclusion. Hence, at issue here is more than the fate of some "outsiders" who have lost their homes as a result of war and other violent conflicts. What is at stake is the normative order of the West, whether we still respect human rights at our borders and abroad, and the answer to this question affects how those same rights are respected at home, and impacts nothing less than the social peace of our societies. A small and very homogenous country like Hungary can be ruled by an authoritarian leader bent on exclusionary nationalism and an anti-immigrant stance, apparently without major disruptions (though the Roma minority will suffer as a consequence, and so will Hungarian Jews in the long run). But if countries like Germany, France, the United Kingdom, or the United States, with their greater ethnic diversity, follow the ideological recipes of right-wing nationalism, the risks are much higher. A blatant ethno-nationalism is likely to alienate some part of their immigrant populations, causing heightened inter-ethnic and racial tensions. The physical wall that President Trump intends to erect at the Mexican border is likely to create mental walls between ethnic groups already living in the US, as well as mental barriers against the whole of the outside world. Moreover, the media's preoccupation with covering and sometimes condemning Trump's border wall agenda may be diverting attention from simple geographic and material facts. It would be impossible to build a wall in the Gulf of Mexico or the Pacific Ocean (as the Europeans have already found out in the Mediterranean), so, in the end, the United States (and Europe) may end up paying drastically higher costs for border protection on both land and on the sea, which could well see new waves of "boat people" arriving in makeshift watercraft. Historians should, however, refrain from advertising such dystopias. There are numerous positive examples of managing refugee movements in constructive ways. These hopeful precedents—along with the refugees' own actions and agendas—are the central topic of this book.

1

THE ROOTS OF INTOLERANCE: RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AND RELIGIOUS REFUGEES

Narratives of flight and refugees were common as early as the Hebrew Bible. Abraham's migration out of Canaan, the exodus of the Israelites from out of Egypt, the Babylonian exile, and numerous other episodes center on this theme. The New Testament is not far behind with its story of Mary and Joseph fleeing Herod's henchmen and able to return to their home in the Galilee only after the king's death.

The biblical texts already contain all the important motifs of flight and refuge: existential dangers and distress, ethnic conflicts, religious and political persecution. The reception of refugees described in the Bible is, on the one hand, underpinned by an ethical imperative to help the needy stranger. On the other, the Bible describes empty, sparsely inhabited swaths of land as the settlement places available to refugees. These conditions persist into much later history. Owing to the invasion of the Mongols in the thirteenth century, epidemics of plague, and the ravages of the Thirty Years' War, large sections of Europe were repeatedly depopulated. Increasing the number of residents and cultivating the land by settling it were therefore among the key elements of any government's development policy. Imagining the "New World" as a presumably empty space also played a major role in the legends European settler colonies told about the Americas. As a rule, medieval and early modern Absolutist monarchs saw refugees and other immigrants as an asset. Far from being a burden or a threat, they were a potential source of economic power. Jewish, Protestant, and other refugees were even solicited.

1.1 The Spanish Muslims and Jews

The year 1492 is commonly regarded as the dawn of modern history. It also marks a deep caesura in the history of mass flight, because it began with an unprecedented persecution and cleansing of unwanted minorities. Just as Christopher Columbus was first setting foot on American soil, the Spanish

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